

(Continued from front cover)

dry across **southern Texas**, while long-term drought continued to intensify on the **northern and central High Plains**. Late-week temperatures briefly topped 100°F as far north as **Montana**, where most spring-sown small grains had already headed, and reached 105°F on parts of the **central and southern Plains**. High temperatures in the **Southeast** frequently ranged from 95 to 100°F, peaking near 105°F at week's end. In contrast, **Midwestern** readings remained below 90°F in all but the **westernmost Corn Belt**, favoring reproductive corn and soybeans. Weekly temperatures ranged from 3°F below normal in the **eastern Corn Belt** to 3°F above normal in western areas. Across the **Plains** and **South**, however, weekly temperatures averaged as much as 7°F above normal. Dry, slightly cooler-than-normal weather prevailed in the **West Coast States**, while warm, mostly dry conditions further reduced soil moisture for pastures and rain-fed small grains in the **Interior Northwest**.

Early in the week, heavy rain continued to soak the **northwestern Corn Belt**. On July 9 in **Minnesota**, **Rochester** (3.13 inches) and **Minneapolis-St. Paul** (2.55 inches) noted daily-record rainfall totals. Another round of heavy showers reached the region on Tuesday, when **Aberdeen, SD** (1.95 inches) netted a daily-record sum. Favorably drier air overspread the **Corn Belt** toward week's end, while heavy rain developed in the **East**. On Saturday, daily-record totals in **New York** included 3.23 inches in **Albany** and 2.36 inches in **Rochester**. Late-week rainfall exceeded 4 inches in much of **southeastern New York** and parts of **western New England**. Meanwhile, much-needed rainfall dampened parts of the drought-stricken **Southeast**. Weekly rainfall topped 2 inches in parts of the **southern Appalachians**, the **South Carolina coastal plain**, **south-central Georgia**, and **southern Florida**.

However, extreme heat across the **South** offset some of the rain's beneficial effects. On Saturday, daily-record highs were set in locations such as **Pensacola, FL** (101°F), **Montgomery, AL** (103°F), and **Meridian, MS** (105°F). **Montgomery's** highs averaged 100.1°F during the week, reaching or exceeding the 100-degree mark on 4 days. During the first 15 days of the month, **Montgomery's** average high of 98.5°F was more than 7°F above their average July maximum. **Meridian's** temperature attained 95°F or greater on 11 consecutive days (July 5-15), following a month that featured maxima of 95°F only twice (on June 12 and 24). In **Florida**, **Pensacola** closed the week with three consecutive triple-digit highs, including a maximum of 102°F on Friday. In addition, **Pensacola's** July 1-15 rainfall totaled 0.05 inch (3.50 inches below normal), leaving their year-to-date deficit at 19.19 inches. Elsewhere in **northern Florida**, **Tallahassee's** January 1 - July 15 rainfall totaled 11.88 inches (33 percent of normal), 24.34 inches below normal.

On the **Plains**, 100-degree heat pushed as far east as **eastern Kansas** on Monday, resulting in the year's first triple-digit readings in locations such as **Wichita** (102°F) and **Topeka** (100°F). Heat surged northward after midweek, resulting in daily records as far north as the **northern High Plains**. On Thursday,

highs in **Montana** included 102°F in **Billings** and 101°F in **Havre**. A day later, **Miles City, MT** noted 105°F. Cooler weather returned to the **northern Plains** at week's end, but heat persisted farther south. In **Colorado**, Saturday was **Denver's** last day of a 17-day (June 29 - July 15) streak with highs at or above 90°F. During **Denver's** 128-year period of record, only two streaks (18 days apiece in July 1874 and July 1901) were longer. Meanwhile in **Texas**, **San Angelo** closed the week with five consecutive highs at or above 100°F, including a daily-record high of 105°F on July 15. **Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX** tallied their first four days of 100-degree heat this year from July 12-15, including a high of 105°F on Thursday.

In contrast, cool air settled into the **West** and **Northeast**. On Saturday, **Hillsboro, OR** (40°F) and **Olympia, WA** (39°F) collected daily-record lows. Meanwhile, parts of the **Corn Belt** continued to await their first 90-degree heat of the year. During the week, highs peaked at 89°F in **Chicago, IL** (on July 9) and 87°F in **Indianapolis, IN** (on July 10 and 14).

Widespread showers aided wildfire containment efforts across **interior Alaska**, where more than 600,000 acres burned during the month ending in mid-July. Warm weather (up to 3°F above normal) continued in **southwestern Alaska**, but near- to slightly below-normal temperatures prevailed elsewhere. Meanwhile in **Hawaii**, drier weather returned, following 2 weeks of drought-easing showers.

U.S. Crop Production Highlights

The following information was released by USDA's Agricultural Statistics Board on July 12, 2000. Forecasts refer to July 1.

Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.59 billion bushels, down 2 percent from last month and down 7 percent from 1999. The U.S. yield is forecast at 44.9 bushels per acre, down 1.8 bushels from last month.

Hard Red Winter wheat, at 887 million bushels, is down 6 percent from a month ago. White Winter wheat is up for the second consecutive month and now totals 235 million bushels. Soft Red Winter wheat, at 467 million bushels, is up 4 percent from the last forecast.

Durum wheat production is forecast at 128 million bushels, up 29 percent from 1999. The U.S. yield is forecast at 32.2 bushels per acre, 4.4 bushels more than last year.

Other Spring wheat production is forecast at 526 million bushels, up 5 percent from 1999. The U.S. yield is forecast at 34.9 bushels per acre, 0.8 bushel higher than last year. Of this total, 470 million bushels are Hard Red Spring wheat, up 5 percent from last season, while 56 million bushels are White Spring wheat.